

**Message Points
HHS Pan Flu Summit
February 24, 2006**

INTRODUCTION

- WELCOME AND THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ATTEND THIS IMPORTANT SUMMIT.
- THIS CENTURY IS ONLY A FEW YEARS OLD, BUT WE HAVE ALREADY FACED A NUMBER OF UNUSUAL AND DEMANDING CHALLENGES.
- TODAY WE MEET TO FACE ANOTHER CHALLENGE – ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH ISSUES FACING OUR STATE, THE NATION AND THE WORLD – THE POSSIBILITY OF PANDEMIC INFLUENZA.

PURPOSE OF SUMMIT

- DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY YOU WILL HEAR THE DETAILS – HOW A STRAIN OF FLU HAS STRICKEN THE AVIAN POPULATION IN ASIA, HOW IT HAS SPREAD FROM EASTERN EUROPE TO THE WESTERN PORTION OF THAT CONTINENT, AND HOW IT IS SHOWING UP IN PARTS OF AFRICA.
- ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN POPULATION HAS BEEN LIMITED – LESS THAN 200 PEOPLE HAVE CONTRACTED THE DISEASE WORLDWIDE – BUT 50 PERCENT OF THOSE HAVE DIED.
- IN ADDRESSING THIS SITUATION, SOME OF THE ISSUES WE NEED TO CONSIDER TODAY ARE:

- HOW WILL THE STATE COPE WITH DISRUPTIONS TO THE SUPPLY CHAIN OF CRITICAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?
- HOW WILL THE EXISTING PUBLIC-PRIVATE DISASTER RESPONSE SYSTEM PROVIDE BASIC NEEDS – SUCH AS FOOD, MEDICINE AND UTILITIES -- TO PERSONS WHO ARE ILL, HOMEBOUND OR CANNOT CARE FOR THEMSELVES?
- HOW READY ARE BUSINESSES TO COPE WITH LARGE-SCALE ABSENTEEISM?
- HOW WILL MARYLAND GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESSES MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS WHEN AS MUCH AS 30 PERCENT OF THE WORKFORCE COULD BE OUT FOR MORE THAN EIGHT WEEKS?

MARYLAND IS DOING ITS PART

- FORTUNATELY, MARYLAND’S OWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT SAW THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL, AND HAS RESPONDED ACCORDINGLY.
- BACK IN 1999, WELL BEFORE H5N1 HIT THE HEADLINES, EPIDEMIOLOGISTS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE REALIZED THE WORLD WAS OVERDUE FOR A PANDEMIC AND STARTED TO CREATE A RESPONSE PLAN.
- YOU WILL HEAR FROM OTHER MARYLAND DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES SHORTLY, ALL OF

WHO HAVE TAKEN STEPS WITHIN THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AREAS TO ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS I MENTIONED BEFORE.

CONCLUSION

- OBVIOUSLY, WE CANNOT ANSWER EVERY QUESTION TODAY. HOWEVER, THIS SUMMIT GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY TO **LISTEN AND PLAN TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE THIS SITUATION.**
- COMMUNITY PLANNING IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE SUCCESS OF MARYLAND'S -- OR ANY -- RESPONSE PLAN.
- NOW IT IS YOUR TURN TO PARTICIPATE. PUT YOUR CREATIVE MINDS TO WORK TO HELP MARYLAND PREPARE FOR WHAT COULD BE A MONUMENTAL CHALLENGE.
- YOU WILL BE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE YOUR THOUGHTS IN FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCES AFTER THE SUMMIT SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO HONE OUR PLAN TO MAKE IT THE BEST ONE POSSIBLE.
- IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE QUITE A LINE UP OF SPEAKERS WAITING TO TALK TO YOU – INCLUDING SECRETARY LEAVETT AND SURGEON GENERAL CARMONA.
- [GOVERNOR TURNS IT BACK OVER TO SECRETARY MCCANN].